

ABSTRACT

The present invention relates to a method and apparatus for delivering personal ad services which substantially eliminate or reduce the disadvantages and problems associated with prior systems that deliver such personal ad services. In the use of such services, the need is recognized for improved capability regarding the features available to Internet users, and the integration of audiotex personal ad services and Internet personal ad services. Several objects and advantages of the present invention are the following:

(a) to allow an Internet user via a computer connected to the Internet to listen to an audio greeting from a audiotex personal ad system;

(b) to allow an Internet user to record an audio greeting via a computer connected to the Internet that can be listened to by other Internet users via the Internet;

(c) to allow an advertiser to record an audio greeting via a computer connected to the Internet that can be listened to from a telephone;

(d) to allow an advertiser to place a personal ad via a telephone and receive a message on the Internet via electronic mail;

(e) to allow a telephone caller to access a text personal ad placed on the Internet using text-to-speech whereby a computer uses a synthesized voice to speak text over a telephone;

(f) to allow a telephone caller to respond to a personal ad that is placed via the Internet, where said response can be retrieved via the Internet;

(g) to allow a telephone caller to do a key word full-text search of personal ads;

(h) to allow a telephone caller to retrieve a text message left in response to her personal ad by an Internet user by using text-to-speech whereby a computer uses a synthesized voice to speak text

over a telephone;

(i) to allow a telephone caller to retrieve an audio message left in response to her personal ad where said audio response is left via a computer connected to the Internet; and

(j) to allow an advertiser to have virtually no limit on the number of words in his text personal ad by publishing personal ads on the Internet.

Further objects and advantages are to allow an advertiser to include a photograph and video clip with his personal ad by submitting a file via a computer connected to the Internet. With the present invention, a personal ad published in a newspaper includes graphical icons which denote if an ad has additional text or multimedia files (a photograph or a video clip) available on the Internet. With respect to personal ad services, the present invention provides the needed improved capability regarding the features available to Internet users, and the integration of audiotex personal ad services and Internet personal ad services.